



Informational Witness Testimony for SB 130, February 1, 2007

My name is Rick DeMarinis, and I am a Fire Protection Engineer for CTA Architects Engineers. CTA employs 350 design professionals and has offices throughout Montana including Billings, Livingston, Bozeman, Helena, Great Falls, Missoula, and Kalispell. We also have offices in Jackson, WY, Boise ID, Seattle, WA, and Austin, TX.

CTA is responsible for designing hundreds of buildings per year within Montana and so, therefore, we have the responsibility to design buildings according to the Building Code and Fire Code that is in effect in Montana. Currently, the State has adopted, with amendments, the International Building Code (IBC). The Fire Code in effect in Montana is the Uniform Fire Code, or NFPA 1. The lone exception is Kalispell, which has adopted the International Fire Code (IFC). It was a surprise to find that Kalispell was enforcing the IFC during the design of a recent project there, and surprises are not desired when designing buildings. However, once we knew we were designing to the IFC the process went smoothly.

The International Fire Code works well with the International Building Code. For example, the format is the same, and references to the IFC from within the IBC text are easily found and interpreted. This is the case in Kalispell, and some of our neighbor states such as Wyoming, Idaho, and Washington who also have adopted the IBC and IFC. For the rest of the State of Montana, references within the IBC to the IFC are meaningless since NFPA 1 is enforced. The formats of NFPA 1 and the IBC are, of course, different which can cause problems with interpretations and enforcement of the code.

Two different code formats adds more time and money to the design process, and can lead to interpretation problems which could be very costly to building owners and developers. CTA fully supports enforcement of a fire code that is compatible with the existing building code, which, in Montana would be the International Fire Code.

Whether the implementation of the IFC in Montana has a greater chance of being implemented by enforcement at the State level, or by local authorities, is not clear. What I do know is that it is important for this change to be made.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rick DeMarinis". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Rick DeMarinis, P.E.

Associate Principal/Sr. Fire Protection Engineer  
CTA Architects Engineers